Dear Dr. Bakker, 4/19/92

When you prescribed vivactil for me I asked you whether if was contra-indicated for me either for the medications I now require or because of my other medical problems. You checked with Dr. Barakat, my cardiologist, and he told you it is safe for me, On the possible interactions with other drugs you said, understandably, that you could not remember all those things and you told me to check with the pharmacist. When that was not really informative my wife did some research. She consulted the AMA's Family Medical Guide and its Home Medical Encyclopaedia, the University of California's (Berkeley) Wellness Encyclopaedia and a 1983 edition of the Physicians Desk Reference, RN Edition.

All list as possible side effects about 10 that I already have plus two that give me particular concern, difficulty urinating and what I'll attach for your information, which she copied from the Desk Reference.

I had a TURP in 1986 and for several years now I've had some difficulty sometimes in urinating. In the hope of forestalling the need for another TURP I'm getting Lupron injections at Johns Hopkins monthly. But for several years I have been well aware of the duplication of the symptoms that led to the TURP. Accompanying it I suffered additional venous thrombosis. I have no fear of that surgery and it was not really uncomfortable but the thrombosis is a real worry. It is one of the reasons I am regarded as a poor risk for surgery of any kind. For each of two that are normally outpatient, the TURP and a cataract removal, I was hospitalized for five days, despite which I did have additional thrombosis, as I'd had earlier with the left femoral arterial implant.

When the Desk Reference also says that vivactil "should be used with caution in elderly patients and patients with cardiovascular disorders; such patients should be observed closely....Myocardial infarctions and stroke have occurred with ~~this~~ drugs of this class..." I am particularly apprehensive about taking it.

So, I wonder whether I should and if not whether there is a substitute that does not come with these many warnings.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

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